



The N2Africa Soil Improvement project by CIAT-TSBF, which works with nitrogen-fixing soil bacteria to increase soybean productivity, provided several crop production materials to over 4000 farmers in Western Kenya between March and April 2011. The materials included 42 demonstration kits, 4084 packets of inoculant, 3875 kg of soybean and climbing bean seed, 8200 kg of fertilizer, and 2750 copies of extension materials.

The work of the project is further supplemented with the participation of the private and the NGO sectors in Kenya including fertilizer blending companies, bio-fertilizer producers, manufacturing companies, and extension organizations. For example, MEA Fertilizer, one of the partner organizations, is providing nitrogen-fixing inoculants and fertilizers to the key implementing farmer groups, who will plant a total of 18,986 kg of seed resulting in an estimated harvest of 380 metric tons of soybean grain by August 2011.

Since inception, the number of cooperating farmers has kept increasing, and their resources expanding, leading to better distribution of production materials amongst the haves and the have-nots. So far, 10 farmers were able to produce a total of 2000 kg of seed, with some selling back a total of 500 kg of seed to the project.

During this event, SSP and SYMPAL PKS+ were the two fertilizers distributed, to allow farmers be actively involved in the search for the ultimate fertilizer they prefer, by comparing the two. However, formal comparison of the two formulations is being done in demonstrations on the farm. This demonstration is the first of several others scheduled to take place in the year. Already two training activities are planned for in the course of this year, touching on legume processing and master farmer training.

The key constraint for the farmers' crop has been rust disease, which significantly reduces yields. During the demonstrations though, the fungicide and foliar enhancer called Amistar Xtra was supplied to farmers by Syngenta, who also provided spray guns and training to each farming group.

Important to be noted on the project is that one of the manufacturers has announced a tender for 4000 tons of soybeans for delivery in February 2012, a part of which will be met by the participation of all the N2Africa outreach groups. The tender is a guaranteed market for the farmers' yields. The sale will realize the farmers an income of Kshs 20 million (US\$750,000). To supplement this income, a private company, Smart Logistics, is offering KSh 1 per kg to the local

organizations that arrange collection points of the produce, resulting to an extra KSh 2 million for use in expanding services to the farmers. This is a real challenge to the project but a worthwhile one, leading to economic growth of farmers as well as into the country's agricultural income. The challenge will stretch the projects available funds and logistic capacity, but if there is any real change

to come through for the farmers then they must be connected to strong markets.

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